/For the organization of musicians into Band Clubs, see category,575./

In terms of the social pattern of the rural village, this means that there is a very significant distinction to be made between the older generation of farmers proper and the younger generation whose direct attachment to the land and farming is weaker if not already broken. If one turns to a consideration of the way of life and living standards in the village community this gulf is apparent. Most spectacular perhaps are changes in clothing. 178 241 561

The familiar working garb of the farmer has been the heavy woollen vest, cotton trousers, waistcoat, and cap. Recently, army-surplus shirts, denims, etc., have replaced the locally-made garment, often of home-grown cotton, while the cummerbund is now rare. Sandals are normally worn for walking but not for work. The farmer who works round the clock has never had a 'best suit'. He attends Mass in his working clothes before going to the fields and, on Sundays and holidays, ventures forth as on any other day with the possible addition of a woollen cardigan or more presentable waistcoat. For women, the use of the *faldetta* ribbed hood has declined rapidly in the last 20 years and is now only worn by the older women in the villages and by female members of the M.U.S.E.U.M. movement. The use of black generally by women is declining but most clothes are still made in the home even if from bought material rather than home-produced cotton or wool. The younger generation are not usually content to venture forth dressed in the manner of their parents but insist on making their own appearance as much like that of the average town-dweller among whom they aim to move socially. The white shirt, smart suit, shoes, socks, and well-oiled hair of the young men and the bright dresses, high-heeled shoes, nylons and cosmetics of the village maidens are regarded as the essential uniform of the seeker after the bright lights of Valletta and the towns. The schools have played a part in this with their demands on cleanliness, footwear and dress in the classroom. Occasionally a child goes bare-foot to a village school but no one would think of visiting Valletta shoe-less. The imitation of urban standards of dress is particularly apparent in the sub-urban districts where the farming minority are at pains to 'keep up with the Vellas' in dress - in spite of the expense involved. 178 291

Diet in the traditional rural scene depended upon what could be produced by the fields and animals held by any family. The standard soups and stews (such as *minestra* and *brodu*) were consequently largely vegetable. Meat was rarer, fish seasonal and small birds might be added to a stew depending on the results of the hunting or, more correctly, shooting which was and is a popular Sunday and Holiday pastime in the countryside. The diet was rather less 'Italian' than that in Valletta and the towns, with potatoes in place of the various forms of farinaceous paste - spaghetti, macaroni, etc. As in the rest of the Islands before the 1939-45 war, milk was taken fresh from goats and sheep and was not infrequently disease-carrying. Tinned milk is now popular in town and country but consumption of bottled, pasteurised milk is growing. Tea and coffee drinking have to some extent replaced local and home-made wines, especially in the many bars and small cafés which have become the leisure-time resorts of the men of the villages between strolls in the squares and streets. Even here change is evidenced, for the traditional guitar-accompanied *għana* of the Maltese peasant has given way to *Radio e Televisione Italiana* as the basis of café entertainment. 178 [262] [272] [533] [207]

This very increase in leisure time is significant. The old farmer is content to spend the greater part of every day with his animals or in the fields for they are in fact his hobby as well as his livelihood. Cinemas and bright lights hold no attraction for him; but the young man insists on recreation as he sees it in the towns. The timetable of the farmer varies according to his type of farming. The herdsmen's life is ruled by the routine of feeding and attention demanded by his cows or goats and by the times of milk collection demanded by the Milk Marketing Undertaking. All this means an earlier daily start (sometimes 1 or 2 a.m.) than is usual for the field worker who begins his day with a 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. Mass and then stops for a light breakfast some three hours later. Lunch-time is 11 a.m. or noon and is followed by a *siesta* of some hours, depending on the season and the pressure of work to be completed before the sun goes down and the field-worker shoulders his hoe or his wooden plough and returns home 512

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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house to house, transform the streets into gaily lighted tunnels. The piazza is usually draped in flags, and all the clubs are also dressed in their festal finery and their doors thrown open to the public. Many bands are hired and the mountains of fireworks are fused and made ready. All this is done before the visitors from outside arrive, and involves a great deal of organization, time and money.

The festa is thus an occasion on which communal values are reaffirmed and strengthened, as individuals and groups express their loyalty to their patron saint and unite to defend and enhance the reputation of their village. At the same time, the central position which the Church occupies in the social structure is strongly reinforced, for the parish church is the hub around which this festive occasion turns.

A festa is also an occasion on which the bonds of kinship are reinforced, for each family opens its doors to its relations, especially to those who live in other villages. Grown sons and daughters return to their parental home, forming, for a few hours, a grand family with a depth of three or four generations. Because of this influx of relatives, younger children learn to recognize more distant relatives whom they might not see at any other time of the year, and become aware of the network of kin relations that stretches out from their home. As parents become momentarily more indulgent during the festa and relax their watchfulness, it is also a favourite meeting time for courting couples and a traditional occasion on which marriageable boys and girls are introduced to one another.

The celebration of a village festa usually lasts three days. It consists of religious ceremonies, which take place principally within the church, and secular celebrations outside the church. The Maltese themselves make a distinction between these two elements in the festa: they call the former the 'internal feast' (*il-festa ta' ġewwa*) and the latter the 'external feast' (*il-festa ta' barra*). These often take place simultaneously. The mixture of sacred and profane which results was shown to me very vividly during one of the first festas I attended. I was in the church during a particularly solemn moment in the service of worship. Suddenly there was a nerve-shattering burst of fireworks from the roof of the church. Then, slowly, the sharp smell of burning gunpowder began to drift in through the open doors and mingle with the pungent odour of candles and incense. After that I ceased to be

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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aware of their separateness, and realized that both incense and gunpowder were ingredients basic to the celebration of a festa.

The actual celebration of the feast can be divided into three parts: the Triduum or Novena – the three to nine days of spiritual preparation which precede the feast day – the eve of the feast, and the day of the feast. As the feast is usually celebrated on a Sunday so that more people can come, the Triduum days are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. High Mass is offered on these days, and in the evenings outside priests often come to preach sermons on religious topics related to the life of the patron saint. They are also days of preparation during which the elaborate street decorations are hoisted into place. Throughout the day the village is psychologically conditioned to the festa by salvoes of aerial bombs which are often timed to coincide with the ringing of the Paternoster and the Angelus. On the last day of the Triduum, after the final sermon, the village band marches through the main streets. Often the band is preceded by a mass of dancing and shouting enthusiasts of both sexes, who wave coloured scarves, silver loving cups and other symbols of their loyalty to their band and their saint. In villages where there are competing band clubs, this demonstration often provokes fights between rival supporters. These skirmishes are usually sparked off by the bands of girls who hoarsely shout themselves into a frenzy proclaiming the virtues of their saint and the shortcomings of their rivals. There are no visitors during this part of the feast.

On Saturday, the eve of the feast, there is a High Mass and Te Deum to mark the end of the Triduum. This is usually followed by a barrage of aerial fireworks. The local band then often marches through the village, stopping at all the clubs for drinks. This march is usually quite gay but in some villages it degenerates into a drunken spree. During the day, outside priests are brought in specially for the festa to hear confessions in the church. In the late afternoon, visitors begin to arrive to watch the Translation, a ceremony during which the celebrant, usually the Bishop, takes a relic of the saint on a short procession outside the church. After the Translation, the various guest bands march through the village and then settle down to play selections from operas and works composed by Maltese bandmasters. The many relatives and friends of the bandsmen join the gaily dressed crowds who have been streaming in by bus and car or on foot.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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For several hours they wander up and down the principal streets, past the nougat vendors, past the dazzling houses with their doors and shutters thrown open to attract the eyes of all to festal drapes and carpets, gleaming cookers and new refrigerators. The crowd moves on past the packed bars and through the festooned clubs, their silver trophies all on show. Stopping now and then to eat and drink and talk with friends, they move into the church and past the banks of flowers that stand before the statue of the patron saint. From there, now surrounded by the red damask and the cut-glass crowns suspended from the golden ceilings, they pass before the silver altar-front and gaze at the jewel-encrusted reliquaries on display beside it. Now and then there is a soft discussion of price and craftsmanship as a new picture or silver candlestick reaches past the guttering candles for the attention of the crowd. Slowly, for many stop to kneel and say a prayer, the people move out through the door and past the bandstand, and on to make the round again.

The climax of the evening comes at eleven o'clock, when the forest of standing fireworks which have been planted in the square is lighted, and the second day of the festa closes in a shower of sparks and acrid smoke.

On the morning of the feast-day, there is a Solemn High Mass during which some noted clerical orator delivers a lengthy and bombastic panegyric of the saint. After the service the committees of the various clubs make formal calls on each other and exchange hospitality. The parish priest and the village clergy also call on each of the clubs and associations. Following this, the people retire to their houses for huge luncheons with their close relatives. In the late afternoon the long procession with the statue of the saint slowly moves from the church. The saint, carried by white-robed members of the confraternities, stops on the threshold to take the salute of 21 petards and barrage of smaller rockets, the *kaxxa infernal*, which often last up to twenty minutes.[1] As the saint at last leaves the church he is cheered on his way by groups of shouting devotees. The crowds are thicker than the night before, and amuse themselves in much the same way. There are also more bands, and sometimes as many as five will be

[1] These petards are usually immense. They are often made from half-gallon tins packed with gelignite that is either stolen or extracted from dud shells and bombs fished up from military target areas by festa enthusiasts. Occasionally their explosions break windows.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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competing for the attention of the crowd within a few yards of each other.

All the while, the procession, followed by a few black-clad penitents, solemnly passes through the main streets of the village. Often those carrying the saint move with a shuffling step that causes him to bob and turn as though he were dancing. As he passes under balconies his cheering and clapping admirers shower him with confetti. Then, as the procession nears the church, the final *kaxxa infernal*, this time of coloured rockets, is touched off. In some villages the saint is turned around so that he can see this barrage and the display of multi-staged rockets that follows it. The statue then enters the church and the Benediction is given. After this the crowd of visitors quickly disperses. Soon the inhabitants have the village to themselves again. As the women and girls wheel and pull the children off to bed, the men carry around from club to club the grimy, soot-stained men who made and fired the fireworks. They are the heroes of the hour. Other men seek out their clubs or usual cafés and toast one another and the success of their feast. So ends the festa for another year.

The organization of the annual festa requires a long period of planning and preparation. This work calls for a certain degree of centralization. In most villages the parish priest controls the organization of both the internal and the external feasts. In some villages, however, he delegates some of this work to a procurator, usually a priest, but occasionally to a committee of leading personalities of the village. In other villages, all the details of the external feast, including the fund raising, are handled by the band club committees. In any case, the parish priest always has the last word. Sometimes there is friction between him and other interested parties over organizational details.

The cost of these feasts varies considerably. It is naturally related to the size of the village and to the degree of enthusiasm with which the festa is celebrated. It ranges from a few shillings per family in a large urban parish to as much as £15 per family in a small rural parish celebrating a particularly important festa. The average cost to the community, however, is about £1,000. The organizers of the festa collect the necessary funds by means of lotteries, fairs, special appeals and a small weekly contribution of threepence or sixpence from each family. Most fund raisers also solicit pledges from leading citizens and enter their names and the

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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Children begin to express partit affiliation when they are between twelve and fourteen years old. At this age they are old enough to follow the processions and take part in the demonstrations on their own. Fund raisers make demands on them, and they are asked to help decorate the streets. At this age they also begin to play in the band. A youngster would jeopardize his social standing with his elders and with his age mates if he failed to take a firm position with regard to one of the saints. This would remove him from much of the community's social life. Consequently, by the time a village boy has reached fifteen, he has usually selected his partit, thus accepting and becoming part of the fabric of partit rivalry which will hold him until he dies or leaves the village.

There is some relation between occupational class and partit affiliation: in general, the supporters of titular saints belong to a higher occupational class than their rivals. The reason for this will be discussed a little later. The data I gathered in Farrug illustrate this correlation clearly. As shown in Table No. 6 below, 83 per cent of the village's professional and white-collar workers belong to the St. Martin partit, while only 38 per cent of those engaged in agriculture do so.

TABLE 6. Farrug: Partit Affiliation and Occupational Class

OCCUPATION			PARTIT AFFILIATION	
	Number	*Percentage of Lab. Force*	*St. Martin*	*St. Roque*
Professional and clerical	12	4	83%	17%
Service and skilled	115	39	55	45
Semi- and unskilled	124	42	48	52
Agricultural	45	15	38	62
Total	296	100		

So much for the origin and social composition of the partiti. I may just observe here that festa partiti are not usually based on territorial divisions. Since upward mobility does not involve change of partit, but is often accompanied by a change of residence, all residential areas are mixed. Nonetheless, there is a tendency for supporters of the titular partiti to live in the better residential area near the church, and for their rivals to live in the poorer sections more remote from the central square. This is a reflection of the differing occupational class of the members. This

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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definition of the dogma of her immaculate conception four years earlier, and to St. Joseph, who was declared patron of the Catholic Church in 1870. Virtually all the secondary partiti are dedicated to one of these two.[1] At the same time, there was a general elaboration of the celebrations connected with the cult of saints, including the Italian and Sicilian custom of having bands play during the festas.[2] These were but a part of the more general influx of Italian ideas and customs which accompanied the refugees from Italy of the Risorgimento, who streamed into Malta following 1850. The propaganda efforts of the pro-Italian politicians of the time assisted in the diffusion of these customs, especially in the urban areas.

During this period a conception of social organization new to Malta was also gaining currency, namely the idea of voluntary associations for laymen, and in particular, social clubs for 'gentlemen'. After the establishment in Valletta of the exclusive British Union Club in 1826 and the equally exclusive Casino Maltese in 1850, clubs of various kinds began to spring up in many villages. They multiplied so rapidly that a local chronicler wrote in 1890, 'Today you don't find a village without one or two, nor a city without three or five.'[3]

The latter half of the last century was a period of relative economic prosperity for Malta. This resulted from the increase in military and naval activity after the outbreak of the Crimean War; the sharp expansion in government spending on public works programmes from 1859 to 1865; and the renewed world demand for Maltese cotton as a result of the cotton shortage created by the American Civil War.[4] The economic boom increased the demand for unskilled labour from the villages. This, in turn, helped to disseminate urban-Italian cultural traits. It also provided a financial basis which permitted increased expenditure on festa decorations, fireworks, and above all, uniforms and instruments for the bands. Finally, this period saw the establishment of government schools in all the villages. City-born schoolmasters moved into rural

[1] See Appendix A.
[2] See, for example, Giuseppe Pitrè, *Feste Patronali in Sicilia*, vol. XXI of *Biblioteca delle Tradizioni Populari Siciliane* (Torino-Palermo, Carlo Clausen, 1900), *passim*. He also indicates that a number of Sicilian towns and villages are divided by rivalry between supporters of different saints. (pp. xlvii ff.)
[3] P. P. Castagna, *Lis-Storia Ta Malta* (3 vols.; Valletta, C. Busuttil, 1890), III, 128.
[4] Charles A. Price, *Malta and the Maltese: A Study in Nineteenth Century Migration* (Melbourne, Georgian House, 1954), pp. 105 ff.

5: Cremona 8-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Bombazine (without lace) or silk faldettas are now
292 the popular style. The vernacular *tulqána* and *ghonnella* for
192 the *faldetta* point to its probable origin; the word *ghonnella* is
765 derived from the Italian *gonnella*. The term *falda*, with its
178 diminutive *faldetta* (skirt), suggests that this hood or wimple
301 represents the tail of the skirt put over the head inside out in wet weather. Black stone trinkets are worn in place of those of gold. Women in both villages and towns who cannot afford to buy special trinkets cover their earrings with black stuff.

764 The old funeral rites, described by Abela and Ciantar from
[171] extracts from wills of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries,
[177] are only faint survivals of the gorgeous pseudo-pagan rites which prevailed in all parts of continental Europe up to the period of the Reformation, and in Malta when under Italian influence. Up to 1872 the burial of the dead generally took
[192] place in churches or in churchyards (Maltese *zuntier*, from
[671] French *cimetière*). This still continues in country places, where people have family vaults. A law providing for extra-mural interment was proposed by De Rohan (A.D. 1775-1797), but it was only enforced by the Police Law of 1869, when a public cemetery was provided in 1871.

764 Since the adoption of the new burial law, funeral customs
178 have assumed a very simple character. Old custom required that the dead body should be placed on a handbarrow or in a coffin with a cushion stuffed with laurel and orange leaves
[534] fixed under the head. The body was then conveyed to the church, with the relatives and friends following, and the wailing of the mourners accompanied by the sound of bagpipes, which in some villages are now replaced by violins and counterbases to which lamentations are sung. Since the opening of the Addolorata Cemetery the dead are generally transported in
[333] hearses. The tolling of funeral bells was once so important that in many wills careful provision was made for it, and it even
[177] rivalled the usual charitable bequests. This corresponds to
764 Sicilian custom in the fifteenth century. After burial of the corpse, a black carpet or coverlet, or a velvet counterpane, was laid over the grave, and left there for some days. The offering
[184] of flowers to the dead is at present in great favour amongst the less educated, but some of the higher class object to it as a pro-
fanation

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

527 431 191 which time the Senators, as well as the knights and other great men, brought gifts to the Emperor, and in his absence to the Capitol (1).

527 777 It is also the custom in some places of Malta for men to go about strewing some lime in the door-ways on New Year's day. Some idea of good luck may perhaps be associated with the lime; there is no tradition, however, as far as is known, whence this custom arose.

527 203 New Year's greetings in the shape of visiting cards, are very profusely exchanged on this occasion, especially among the better classes.

527 431 533 Groups of street musicians go from house to house, either on the last day of the old year or on the morning of

(1) Capitol, the temple of Jupiter at Rome built on the top of a hill.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the 1st of January playing popular pieces of music, and this they do as a New Year's greeting. These men will rarely leave a house until some little gift of money is bestowed upon them as a remuneration for their trouble in paying their annual congratulations.

ST. ANTHONY'S DAY.

Among the popular Maltese customs in which animals play a leading part, that of the blessing of the quadrupeds of the equine species, in Valletta, on St. Anthony's day, is the most familiar.

On the morning of the 17th January (St. Anthony's day) a number of horses, mules, and donkeys, decked out in ribbons and tassels, are driven in procession in front of the Vittoria, a little

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Candle and the solemn chanting of the 796
"*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*" which is the signal for the uncovering of the Church pictures, which had been covered during the two preceding weeks, and the simultaneous ringing of all the Church bells which were kept hushed in token of mourning during the two preceding days.

General rejoicings now commence, and Easter greetings are profusely exchanged amongst all classes of the people.

Peculiar custom prevails in Valletta 796
and Vittoriosa on Easter Eve. Just 533
at sunset, two or three men, one with 184
a big drum and the others with fifes, playing a merry tune, go about the streets, followed by large crowds of men, among whom noisy bands of lads, who keep rushing and pushing wildly all

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

796 the time through the spectators, each
•533 adding his quota to the universal cla-
184 mour. Everything, however, is done in perfect good humour and no one dreams either of giving or taking offence. (*)

EASTER

796 Very early on Easter Sunday, before daylight, there is, in each town and in some of the villages of Malta, a procession with the image representing the Resurrection of our Lord.

The most popular of these processions is undoubtedly that of Valletta.

Large crowds of people assemble, as

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[197] (*) The Greeks celebrate the feast of Easter with singing and shouting in honour of the Resurrection —with crakling of a large bonfire on Easter evening and on Easter morning before daybreak.
(Brand's "Popular Antiquities").

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Str. Reale, from Fort St. Elmo to Porta Reale, is aglow with the red and white colours of Malta and knights' flags; and at night is ablaze with thousands of variegated lights. 527 186

St. George's Square — opposite the Governor's Palace — is ornamented with splendid clusters of flags, pennons, gonfalons, shields, battle axes, spears, captured cannons and some entire suits of armour, kindly lent from the Palace collection. These suits create great interest, being the original property of the knights, some of the pieces bearing the evidence of shots and sabre cuts. 527 186 543

From the various stands, selected national bands fill the city with sweet music, and in the evening elaborate fire-works illustrate the figures and deeds of the knights. 527 [533]

In connection with this feast, horse ooo

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

The square is most tastefully got up with splendid trophies of arms and red and white flags. From each of the trophies broad red and white sashes are seen hanging, on which the names of those who distinguished themselves by some brave and noble deed in the memorable siege, are written in gold letters. 527 186

The decorations of the column of Victory, in the middle of the square, are simply magnificent. This column is surrounded by four figures, representing 4 Grand Masters in full armour, one of these is the immortal LA VALETTE, who at the head of his knights, and supported by the population of Malta—men, women, and children—succeeded in hurling back, discomfited and disgraced, the Moslem, that would from Malta have sallied forth to the conquest of Europe. 527 186 211

During the day the bands, playing 527 533

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

527 lively marches, parade the principal
533 streets of the old town, preceded by large crowds of people with palm leaves and Maltese flags in their hands.

527 In the evening the enthusiasm in the
541 beautifully illuminated square is intense and prolonged.

[533] Large crowds from all parts of the Island flock here to listen to the choice selections of music, played by the bands on the square, and to witness the grand display of fireworks.

These are indeed worth seeing, especially one set piece. This represents a real fort with the red and white cross banner of the knights at the top. This fort opens fire and is attacked by several Turkish men-of-war, with sails set and the crescent flying at the mast heads.

As these miniatures of old-fashioned

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

galleys come sailing across the square, on wires stretched over the people's heads, towards the fort, they open fire in great style. One after the other they meet their fate, for the fort peppers them cruelly and finally sets them on fire, so that soon—hulls, sails, masts, yards, crescent flags, and all the warlike things about them are in few seconds wrapped in flames and destroyed. 527 541

Before leaving the description of the celebration of this National *fète* at Vittoriosa, I wish to mention that hundreds of loaves are distributed to the needy of that town on the morning of the feast. 527 735

Worth mentioning is the custom which prevails, on the 7th of Sept. among the women residing at Rabato (Notabile) and in the country surrounding it. These, to celebrate the com- 184 527 533

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

184 memoration of the Victory won by the
527 Maltese in the great siege of 1565,
633 instead of coming to take part in the amusements held in Valletta and in the other towns, meet in groups on the terraces, or flat tops of their houses, and keep singing merrily till very late at night.

ANOTHER NATIONAL FEAST

527 The celebration of the glorious vic-
186 tory won by the Maltese over the Turks in 1565 has been of good use to the Maltese, It has enabled them to comprehend more keenly the historic value of this Island.

[175] In fact, some two years ago another
[648] national commemoration has originated at Città Vecchia, on the 3rd or 4th Sunday of September, to celebrate the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

852 it is a sign of a liberal character—if he
[787 picks out the inkstand it points towards
828] inclination for trade or the bar—if he takes the book, the rosary or the candle the assumption is that he intends to dedicate his life to the service of the church.

[574] When the baby makes his or her selection, the guests are treated with refreshments, and they all drink the health and future prospects of the small individual in question.

FUNERALS

764 On the death of a Maltese, two or
767 three women called *Neuuieha*, hired for
• [533] the occasion, and attired in long mourning cloaks, immediately entered the house of the deceased singing in a low and dismal voice, some appropriate deathsong. These women cut away

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

764 767 [292] their faces and black silk cloaks. (*) The room being stripped of all its furniture and hung with black cloth.

[302] The *neuuieha*, throwing themselves on their knees at the foot of the coffin, began singing the praises of the dead, and cut off handfuls of their hair which [262] they spread over the coffin. On the same [431] day, cakes and boiled wheat were distributed among all the relations, and the hair was cut off the tails of every horse at the stables belonging to the house of the deceased.

764 •533 The funeral procession was always composed of the relations in mourning preceded by some boys playing the fifes or trumpets.

[765] [822] [171] (*) The colours of the dress or habit. worn to signify grief are different in different countries. In Europe, the ordinary colour for mourning is black. *Black*, being the privation of light, is supposed to denote the privation of life.

PULLEYN *Origin & Inventions.*

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

lieve that those who get married during this month will be unfortunate.

THE CHURCH ORGAN

Many of our country people want the organ to be played during the mass which is celebrated at their wedding, for they believe that if it is not played the couple will not live long together. To show how much some of our country men believe in this superstition, my friend, Mr. P. P. Castagna, gives the following anecdote in his "Storia ta Malta."

Not long ago a young man went to church at Casal Chircop to get married. On finding, however, that the organist did not turn up to play during the mass, he took off his coat threw it on the floor and went out

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

787 585 533 in a rage, and he could not be persuaded to go back to his wedding before the organist could be found and the organ played for the occasion.

PAYING VISITS

273 594 576 825 If a person goes to pay a visit, for the first time, to a party and is not treated with a sort of drink called *zambur* — made of aniseed—a mouse enters the chest of drawers and gnaws all the petticoats of the mistress of the house.

SENDING TO THE OVEN

252 562 Some people think it a great shame for a woman who sends dishes to be cooked in an oven when her husband is away from the Island.

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

584 her arrival, who presented her with a ring on which [301] was engraved two hands united—the emblem of mutual faith—together with bracelets, necklaces, and a gold chain—she presenting him in return with a handkerchief trimmed with lace and bows of ribbon.

This ceremony is called *il chelma*, which means the engagement.

585 On the morning of the wedding day the most honoured [292] personage among the husband's relations threw a fine [301] white veil over the bride's head—who wore a brocade or velvet dress, in which the other relations made certain rents for the purpose of affixing small golden shells.

• [533] The bridal procession then proceeded to the Church for the ceremony, attended by musicians playing on different instruments, and singers who sang stanzas in praise of the young couple. These musicians were preceded by three men, the first bearing on his head a basin of white earth on which was placed a big cake with two figures representing the bridegroom and the bride—the [431] man who carried this basin wore also a scarf with a round cake hanging from it. The second carried a basket filled with sugar plums and candied nuts, which one of the relations distributed among such acquaintances he hap- [532] pened to meet. In the middle of the basket was a handkerchief folded in the form of a pyramid and ornamented with the images of the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and the Infant Jesus. The third man was constantly employed in burning perfumes. The bride and bridegroom followed, walking under a canopy of crimson velvet carried by four of the principal persons who attended the wedding. The rest of the relations and invited friends, called the *Haddara*, closed the procession.

[202] The arrival of the bridal procession at the church was announced by the ringing of bells. The officiating

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almost as varied and barbaric as at the Holy Fire in Jerusalem. During the rare pauses between the bangs of the explosives and the splutterings of the pyrotechnical diversions one was just able to catch the sound of the chanting of an ecclesiastical procession, faintly audible reminder that the excuse for all this sound was a religious anniversary.

Nor was this by any means all. In an open space outside the village a band was trying in the face of considerable difficulties to play a secular air from some opera, all the bandsmen dressed in what might at a distance have passed for a naval Commander's white uniform, with aiguillettes of yellow cord. All, that is to say, except the *maestro*, whom I still see in my mind's eye as an elderly, worn-out, languid, apathetic cynic in a drooping Panama hat, with a cigarette hanging limply from his lower lip. Two hundred yards away another band was competing with an entirely different tune. Not that it mattered in the least. Nobody was paying the slightest attention to the music; and, even if they had been, neither band had a hope of making its output prevail over the other component parts of the general din.

Likewise do I recall a *festa* in Gozo, where the band, in this case not in uniform, was playing as it marched round the village square. But it afforded the pleasant sight of a man in a brown Homburg hat nonchalantly beating with his right hand the big drum which was being carried fore and aft by two small boys, while fanning himself with his music, which he held in his left.

These particular bands were professionals hired for the occasion, for the villages in question were not large enough to possess bands of their own. But in the large casals the band is a local institution of far wider significance than the specifically musical. Next to the parish church it is probably the most important social nucleus of the township, and influential personages regard it as a distinction to be offered the patronage or honorary Presidency of its organization. It may have even a political connotation. In the towns which

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533 665 are populous enough to run to two bands these will as likely as not be identified with the opposing political parties.

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357 No book about Malta, no chapter making mention of the country people, would be complete without reference to a class of Maltese largely drawn from the country-folk. In these days, when domestic service is shunned by potential employees and thought of more as a myth than as something that once existed by would-be employers, it is my pleasant duty to record that Maltese servants can be among the best in the world. Such, at all events, has been my experience and that of many of my friends in Malta. Where employer and employee have been able to establish a relationship of mutual esteem and respect (and few people are more ready to respond in this way than the Maltese domestic), the employer in Malta may confidently count not only upon receiving from members of the household staff faithful, efficient and loyal service but upon retaining, if he or she is only a sojourner in the island, their affectionate regard long after he or she has left its shores.

It is, however, regrettable but necessary to add that since these words were first written domestic servants are tending to become as rare in Malta as they are elsewhere.

114 357 Shortly after the First World War a gentleman named Eric Shepherd came to Malta as Professor of English Literature at the University, and remained there for three years. On his experiences during those three years Mr Shepherd subsequently wrote a book called *Malta and Me*,[1] which abounds in puckish humour and flashes of insight and is often extremely entertaining.

But partly because of its puckishness, partly because the author laid what might appear to some to be excessive emphasis on such drawbacks to life as may exist in Malta

[1] Selwyn and Blount, 1926.